

Wichita Environment

Special Interest Articles:

- WATER Center Event
- Carbon Monoxide
- Child Care Classes in Spanish

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World Water Monitoring Day

The WATER Center hosted a World Water Monitoring Day Celebration on Friday October 15, 2004.

Citizens from Wichita and the surrounding community participated in World Water Monitoring Day (WWMD), a worldwide opportunity to positively impact the health of rivers, lakes and other water bodies.

Volunteer monitoring groups, water quality agencies, students, and the general public were invited to test for four key indicators of water quality: temperature, pH, dissolved oxygen, and turbidity.

Event participants tested the Arkansas River, toured the WATER Center, and learned how aquatic wildlife diversity is an indicator of water quality.

Results of the water tests are posted on www.worldwatermonitoringday.org.

Information and sampling results are also posted on the Wichita website (www.wichita.gov) under Environmental Health.



Sampling Results

Participants sampled the Arkansas River in Herman Hill Park at two locations - above and below the WATER Center discharge.

- pH: 8
- Dissolved Oxygen: 4-8 ppm
- Temperature: 16 - 18 C
- Turbidity: 40 JTU

How Can I Get Involved?

If you would like to sample a creek or river in your area for:

- pH
- Dissolved Oxygen
- Temperature
- Turbidity

You may check out a kit from the WATER Center by calling 316-337-9262.

Cleanest Air Since 1970

Total emissions of the six principal pollutants identified in the Clean Air Act dropped again in 2003, signaling that America's air is the cleanest ever in three decades, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reported today.

Annual emissions statistics for the six significant pollutants are considered major indicators of the quality of the nation's air because of their importance for human health and the existence of their long-standing national standards.

Emissions have continued to decrease even as our economy has grown more than 150 percent.

Since 1970, the aggregate total emissions for the six pollutants Carbon Monoxide (CO), Nitrogen Oxides (NOx), Sulfur Dioxide (SO₂), Particulate Matter (PM), Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) and Lead (Pb) have decreased by 51 percent. Total 2003 emissions were down 7.8 percent from 2000.

The EPA recently issued regulations that will cut diesel pollution by 90 percent, and later this year will finalize regulations cutting power plant pollution by approximately 70 percent.

A major reason for the nation's progress is the innovative, market-based acid rain cap-and-trade program enacted in 1990. The program creates financial incentives for generators of some of the principal pollutants.

Carbon Monoxide Awareness

An estimated three hundred people die each year from accidental carbon monoxide poisoning, thousands more are treated at hospital emergency rooms.

These numbers probably only represent a fraction of the total number of people adversely affected by carbon monoxide in their homes because carbon monoxide poisoning is often misdiagnosed or the affected people don't seek medical help.

Carbon monoxide is a natural product of incomplete combustion.

Virtually every gas furnace produces some carbon monoxide, which is usually vented out of the house through the furnace flue pipe.

A clean, efficiently burning gas furnace produces very small amounts of carbon monoxide, while a dirty, inefficiently burning furnace can produce deadly amounts of the colorless and odorless gas.

Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning are often confused with the flu, food poisoning, or depression. Pregnant women (and their unborn baby), infants, elderly, and people with heart and respiratory illness are most at risk.

Very high levels of carbon monoxide can result in death, lower levels can impede coordination and thinking ability.

Home Heating Safety

With cold weather rapidly approaching, it is time again to be thinking about home heating safety. According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), during the months of December, January, and February, heating is the leading cause of home fires. On average, there are 59,100 reported home fires per year associated with heating equipment, killing 468 people and injuring 1,592.

Most heating fires involve space heaters, not central furnaces. Installing space heaters too close to combustibles are major causes of space heater fires.

Heating appliances can also produce carbon monoxide (CO). A gas (including propane) furnace that is not running at peak performance

can be deadly. It is highly recommended that you have your furnace cleaned and checked each year. The older the furnace, the more important this service is.

Newer gas furnaces are equipped with many features that shut the furnace off when a problem is detected. Older furnaces don't have these safety devices. Over time, furnaces can develop cracks in the combustion chamber. These cracks may not be visible to the naked eye. It is through these cracks that carbon monoxide can leak into your home. The flue pipe may also deteriorate over time as a result of the corrosive effects of the combustion gases. Cracks in the flue pipe can also allow dangerous levels of carbon monoxide to seep into the home.

It is also important to change your furnace filter regularly. The filter is usually found just inside the front cover of the furnace. It may have its own access slot right beside the furnace in the return duct. A clean filter will help your furnace operate more efficiently, and also helps keep dust from being circulated through your home.

Furnaces that have not been used for several months will most likely have some dust accumulated on the heating elements and inside of the heat exchanger. This can cause a burning smell and even a light haze of smoke (which may set off smoke detectors) when the furnace is first operated for the season. If the smoke turns black and the furnace starts to rumble leave the building immediately and call the fire department by dialing 911.

New Animal Shelter Supervisor

The Wichita Animal Shelter, located at 3303 N. Hillside has a new supervisor.

Long time employee, Drew Bessey, was the successful candidate for the position amongst several other qualified internal applicants. Drew brings 13 years of Animal Control experience in both field and shelter work with him to his new assignment.

Drew comes into the Animal Shelter Supervisor position at a very exciting time due to the fact that Wichita Environmental Health and the Kansas Humane Society are currently ironing out the details of a pending co-location effort that will result in a state-of-the-art Animal Care Campus housing both the Wichita Animal Shelter and the Kansas Humane Society.

Animal Control is happy to welcome Drew to the management team and is looking forward to his continued contributions.



Thank You WATER Center Donors!

A big thank-you to the following donors for their financial and material contributions:

- **Brian Fisher**
- **City of Wichita, Stormwater Division**
- **Watson Park**
- **Catholic Diocese of Wichita**
- **Raytheon Aircraft Company**

Environmental Site Assessments

The Department of Environmental Health has records of hazardous waste spills, code violations, water well inspections, private sewage system inspections, and groundwater pollution areas.

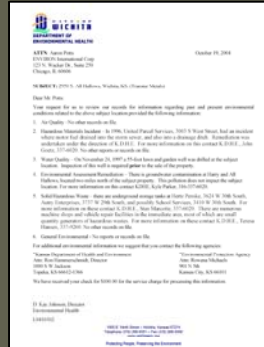
When considering the purchase of a property, it may be wise to research the history of the parcel. Based on the previous use of the property, you may need to contact an environmental consultant.

Many professional environmental consultants

request a historical records search of the Department of Environmental Health's records. This information assists them in completing a Phase 1 or Phase 2 environmental investigation.

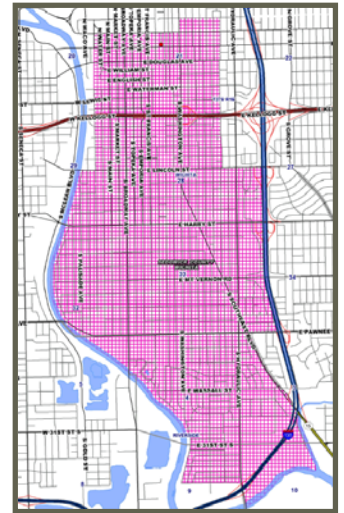
Anyone can request a historical records search or "environmental site assessment" from the Department. To make a request either call 316-268-8351 or fax your inquiry to 316-268-8390.

What will I Receive?
You will receive a written report detailing the results of the records search.



How Much Does It Cost?
Each request is \$100, billed after the report is complete.

How Soon Will I Get My Report?
It takes approximately 10 working days to research and write a report.



Code of the Month

Section 7.30.105 Water wells in contaminated areas.

What Does a Health Inspector Do?

For years the role and professional knowledge of the "environmental sanitarian" has been expanding from the "sanitation" concerns dealing with food processing, restaurants, trash, illegal dump-sites, private water supplies, vector control, and on-site sewage systems.

The "sanitarian" must now recognize and work to fill much of the gap between public health policies and the application and enforcement of those policies.

This includes a number of diverse activities such as advising and educating the public on indoor air quality issues and practices; finding and advising against potential lead poisoning risks to children; protection of natural resources (air, soil, and water) by inspecting and monitoring of the resources and the industries that use them; inspection and disposal of hazardous wastes; and participating in response plans to bio-terrorism

threats.

The local "health inspectors" are becoming more universal in their knowledge and where they will be working.

For more information regarding the Kansas Environmental Health Association or other related careers in environmental health and protection – check out the web address and related links at: <http://www.e-keha.org/>



(a) From and after the date of the ordinance codified in this section, no new water well shall be constructed and used for personal use if the health officer determines that such well is in a contaminated area. (b) Any existing water well shall cease to be used for personal use if the health officer determines that (1) the well is in a contaminated area, (2) public water is available to the water well user, and (3) the cessation of use of the water well for personal use is in the best interest of public health safety and welfare. (Ord. No. 43-156 § 2)

Published by:
City of Wichita
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Environmental Health

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We're on the Web!

See us at:
www.wichita.gov

Happy First Anniversary!

The WATER Center opened its doors on October 16, 2003 and since then 5,000 people have toured the facility and 680 million gallons of water has been treated. Thank you for making the first year a success!

Ribbon Cutting, October 2003



**StreamLink Student
Gathering, April 2004**

**Summer of Discovery,
June – August 2004**



Wedding, August 2004



Conferences, 2003-2004



**World Water Monitoring Day,
October 2004**

Child Care Surveyors Attend Governor's Conference

October 6-8, 2004 marked the 28th Annual Governor's Conference sponsored by the Kansas Children's Service League along with 20+ co-sponsoring agencies. This year the topic was the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect. Nurses--social workers, foster parents, and law enforcement officers made up the 600+ attendees. Topics of discussion ranged from child advocacy to gang

violence, and from meth lab recognition to normal childhood sexuality.

City of Wichita-Environmental Health childcare licensing surveyors received additional training to assist them when conducting complaint investigations where allegations of sexual abuse or drug use are made.

Child Care Licensing Expands Services

Beginning Sept. 2004 the orientation class for persons desiring to care for unrelated children in their home will be offered in Spanish. The current informational class has been translated into Spanish to better serve the growing Hispanic population of Sedgwick County and their daycare needs. Classes will be scheduled according to the demand. For questions regarding these classes please call 268-8351 and ask for Child Care.

About Our Department...

The mission of the Department of Environmental Health is *Protecting People... Preserving the Environment*. This mission is realized through our services, programs and projects that focus on environmental monitoring, code enforcement, and education.

